

PART 1304 – PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR OPERATION OF HEAD START PROGRAMS BY GRANTEEES AND DELEGATE AGENCIES

Subpart A – General

1304.1 Purpose and scope.

This part describes regulations implementing sections 641A, 644(a) and (c), and 645A(h) of the Head Start Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 9801 *et seq.*). Section 641A, paragraph (a)(3)(C) directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to review and revise, as necessary, the Head Start Program Performance Standards in effect under prior law. This paragraph further provides that any revisions should not result in an elimination or reduction of requirements regarding the scope or types of Head Start services to a level below that of the requirements in effect on November 2, 1978. Section 641A(a) directs the Secretary to issue regulations establishing performance standards and minimum requirements with respect to health, education, parent involvement, nutrition, social, transition, and other Head Start services as well as administrative and financial management, facilities, and other appropriate program areas. Sections 644(a) and (c) require the issuance of regulations setting standards for the organization, management, and administration of Head Start programs. Section 645A(h) requires that the Secretary develop and publish performance standards for the newly authorized program for low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers, entitled "Early Head Start." The following regulations respond to these provisions in the Head Start Act, as amended, for new or revised Head Start Program Performance Standards. These new regulations define standards and

minimum requirements for the entire range of Early Head Start and Head Start services, including those specified in the authorizing legislation. They are applicable to both Head Start and Early Head Start programs, with the exceptions noted, and are to be used in conjunction with the regulations at 45 CFR parts 1301, 1302, 1303, 1305, 1306, and 1308.

1304.2 Effective dates.

Early Head Start and Head Start grantee and delegate agencies must comply with these requirements on January 1, 1998. Nothing in this part prohibits grantee or delegate agencies from voluntarily complying with these regulations prior to the effective date.

1304.3 Definitions.

(a) As used in this part:

(1) **Assessment** means the ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility to identify:

(i) The child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs; and

(ii) The resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their child.

(2) **Children with disabilities** means, for children ages 3 to 5, those with mental retardation, hearing impairments including deafness, speech or language impairments, visual impairments including blindness,

serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services. The term "children with disabilities" for children aged 3 to 5, inclusive, may, at a State's discretion, include children experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: Physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services. Infants and toddlers with disabilities are those from birth to three years, as identified under the Part C Program (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in their State.

(3) *Collaboration and collaborative relationships:*

(i) With other agencies, means planning and working with them in order to improve, share and augment services, staff, information and funds; and

(ii) With parents, means working in partnership with them.

(4) ***Contagious*** means capable of being transmitted from one person to another.

(5) ***Curriculum*** means a written plan that includes:

(i) The goals for children's development and learning;

(ii) The experiences through which they will achieve these goals;

(iii) What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals; and

(iv) The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.

The curriculum is consistent with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn.

(6) ***Deficiency*** means:

(i) An area or areas of performance in which an Early Head Start or Head Start grantee agency is not in compliance with State or Federal requirements, including but not limited to, the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations under parts 1301, 1304, 1305, 1306 or 1308 of this title, and which involves:

(A) A threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff;

(B) A denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program governance;

(C) A failure to perform substantially the requirements related to Early Childhood Development and Health Services, Family and Community Partnerships, or Program Design and Management; or

(D) The misuse of Head Start grant funds.

(ii) The loss of legal status or financial viability, as defined in part 1302 of this title, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts or the improper use of Federal funds; or

(iii) Any other violation of Federal or State requirements including, but not limited to, the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations under parts 1301, 1304, 1305, 1306 or 1308 of this title, and which the grantee has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct within the period specified by the responsible HHS official, of which the responsible HHS official has given the grantee written notice of pursuant to section 1304.61.

(7) **Developmentally appropriate** means any behavior or experience that is appropriate for the age span of the children and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels and cultural backgrounds of individual children.

(8) **Early Head Start** program means a program that provides low-income pregnant women and families with children from birth to age 3 with family-centered services that facilitate child development, support parental roles, and promote self-sufficiency.

(9) **Family** means for the purposes of the regulations in this part all persons:

(i) Living in the same household who are:

(A) Supported by the income of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child enrolling or participating in the program; or

(B) Related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption; or

(ii) Related to the child enrolling or participating in the program as parents or siblings, by blood, marriage, or adoption.

(10) **Guardian** means a person legally responsible for a child.

(11) **Health** means medical, dental, and mental well-being.

(12) **Home visitor** means the staff member in the home-based program option assigned to work with parents to provide comprehensive services to children and their families through home visits and group socialization activities.

(13) **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** means a written plan for providing early intervention services to a child eligible under Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). (See 34 CFR 303.340-303.346 for regulations concerning IFSP's.)

(14) **Minimum requirements** means that each Early Head Start and Head Start grantee must demonstrate a level of compliance with Federal and State requirements such that no deficiency, as defined in this part, exists in its program.

(15) **Policy group** means the formal group of parents and community representatives required to be established by the agency to assist in decisions about the planning and operation of the program.

(16) **Program attendance** means the actual presence and participation in the program of a child enrolled in an Early Head Start or Head Start program.

(17) **Referral** means directing an Early Head Start or Head Start child or family member(s) to an appropriate source or resource for help, treatment or information.

(18) **Staff** means paid adults who have responsibilities related to children and their families who are enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start programs.

(19) **Teacher** means an adult who has direct responsibility for the care and development of children from birth to 5 years of age in a center-based setting.

(20) **Volunteer** means an unpaid person who is trained to assist in implementing ongoing program activities on a regular basis under the supervision of a staff person in areas such as health, education, transportation, nutrition, and management.

(b) In addition to the definitions in this section, the definitions as set forth in 45 CFR 1301.2, 1302.2, 1303.2, 1305.2, 1306.3, and 1308.3 also apply, as used in this part.